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warm and close-grained cloth for winter, and its being a little thread-bare improves it for summer use.

I had first determined to appropriate the two pence a day in the following manner....one penny to provide clothing....one halfpenny for provision for aged and sick labourers....one halfpenny for a stock-purse, to be divided once a year.

Any person adopting the principle, may adapt it to his own views of what is most beneficial to his labourers. Nothing, I conceive, is more important than clothing. Several boys in my employment have paid from fifteen to eighteen shillings for clothing; a blessing indeed it is to them in particular, as the parents in general would drive them into the field half naked, robbing their backs to glut their own stomachs. Your pages are of too much consequence, I presume, to admit of stating fully all the advantages attending this simple plan. To talk of the trouble of it, would be really ridiculous. Any person who gives the experiment a fair trial (if he has a warm feeling in his breast for the distresses of his fellow-men) will thank me for this communication, and you for giving it publicity.

PHILADELPHOS.

P. S. Should the account of the Maryborough Institution excite sufficient interest in the breast of any, to urge them to "go and do likewise," they can receive any further assistance and information, by writing (post paid) to the Secretary, at Maryborough.

*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

EXTRAORDINARY PROPHECY OF MERLIN'S, ON THE EVE OF BEING COMPLETED.

THE following curious letter was inserted in one of the London prints in the year 1801; it is now thought worthy of republication, because the principal event foretold in the prediction it contains, has every probability of coming to pass in the course of the month of October. Men of much eminence for judgment and learning have not hesitated to express astonishment at some of the articles contained in Merlin's

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prophecies; this one is perhaps as extraordinary as any of them. No person of sense will give way to superstition of any kind, and a little consideration will show that prophecies of this nature can form no rational guide for the direction of any man's conduct in any particular; it is only presented as a literary curiosity, and if we cannot account for the means by which Merlin seemed to dive into futurity, except by the old way of cutting the knot, it is but one wonder in common with hundreds, with which we are surrounded in the natural world, which the most profound philosophers could never unravel:

LETTER SIGNED OSIRIS.

"Being lately in a company where the conversation turned on the extraordinary appearance of the planets this year, all of which were to be seen at once on the northern side of the ecliptic, I set about to discover in old books of astronomy, whether such a phenomenon had been predicted or no. A friend of mine referred me to Merlin's prophecies, published by Hawkins, in the reign of Henry VIII. in which, he said, this circumstance was alluded to; but in terms so loose that nothing could be made of it, and which might be applied to any period of the reader's fancy, as well as the present. I found it accordingly in what are called Merlin's Centuries; and the passage seemed to me so curious, that I resolved to publish it, with such explanations as in my mind render it very intelligible, and strongly pointed to the commencement of the present century. Of this let others judge as they please: I here send you the whole passage referred to, in the very spelling of the time, as I transcribed it:

Three workend wekes in hondredes tould,  
A dozeine whol and half biholde:  
Ther comyth one off doutefulle size,  
Quhom Albione shal heighly prize.  
Though at fyrst dawne he chaunge her  
name,  
And Islondes twane make bote one reame;  
Though derth and famyne rage withyn,  
And gould and corn beu hardlie sene;  
Withouten ben youre fame possess't,  
Be North and Suth, and Este and West.

A 2

A daye is lost, a kingdome won.  
 Thir thynges happe fyrst : than 'spyeth  
     Suane,  
 North off hys rode, in spryngfulte game,  
 Hys children sporting wyth a ram.  
 Newe race to com fro Saxon shor,  
 Threde kinge doth gif fro credles fowre  
 He shal reboffe invader Dane.  
 A bluddy sword, hys Golfe to staine,  
 That arm shal beare that bore a sheid,  
 And battles wyn wheir is noe feilde.  
 My sons, thynk on threde Edward's glorie;  
 Hys yeres agen ben tould in storie.  
 Newe klok off tyme tell three be three;  
 Agen come roiale jubilee!  
 Then daunce th Tamys long hys stroude,  
 And merie daye hath auld Ynglonde.  
 Tyme's newe yere's sand nine torns shal  
     see,  
 Com second skeptered jubilee!  
 Auld greye must then be chaunged to  
     grene.  
 Loh ! ther, agen a maydene Quene !

The above is all that is necessary for the present purpose. Now I beg the reader's attention to the following notes :

*Three working weeks*—The old bard is writing of centuries, and plainly describes the present, 19th.—Three weeks of six days each, in hundreds, make 1800, or a dozen and a half hundreds. After which, comes one

*Of doubtful size*—That is the present century ; about the beginning of which, some wits would puzzle us during the whole of it, to find out when it began.

*Though at first dawn*—It opened with the union of Great Britain and Ireland, the two islands that make but one *realm*, or royalty. The scarcity of *gold and corn* raises a reflection too severe to be much dwelt upon. But we may with pride and pleasure agree with the Seer, in extending our national fame to all the four quarters of the globe; Denmark, Egypt; East and West Indies, readily satisfy those words, the first of which comes peculiarly in time now.

*A day is lost*—This line at first made me despair of discovering a proper application. I think, however, I have found it in the loss of the leap-year's day of last year; which in the ordinary course would have been a leap-year, but by the change of style became otherwise. The *kingdom won* is easily known, as above-mentioned.

*Then seeth the Sun*—North, &c.—

This very extraordinary position of all the planets, not excepting the Georgian, so as to be seen all at the same time in the North, can only refer to the present spring. As they are the attendants of the sun, they are properly called *his children*. Their *sporting with the Ram* is the present period when the sun is in *Aries*. for whether a planet be seen from the sun, or the sun from a planet, the effect is the same with regard to the sign of the Zodiac.

The *new race* from the Saxon shore, can be no other than the illustrious House of Brunswick. In Merlin's time the whole north of Germany was called Saxony.

*Third king doth give from cradles four*—This may to some appear mysterious, but it is very plain, if the last observation is just. *Cradle* among our ancestors was a word used metaphorically for descents, or generations; for the same cradle nursed all the children of the family. Now his majesty is the *fourth* in descent of this *new race*, and the *third* sovereign: his father having died when prince of Wales.

*Invader Dane*—What can these lines allude to but the late glorious news from the *Gulf* of these our ancient invaders! whose invasions terrified this whole island in Merlin's time; and the word *rebuff* may be aptly given to our present retaliation upon their own home. And by whose sword? The arm that bears it is said to have *borne a shield*. Here I must again dip into the Saxon customs. They described by *sword-arm* and *shield-arm*, the right and left; and the conqueror alluded to (if my explanation is just) has only left a *shield-arm* to wield this bloody sword that stained the Danish gulf.

*Where is no field*—The sea, the element of our victory.

*Third Edward's glory*—This part of the prophecy remains to be fulfilled, and may be worth all the rest, if it insures us (as I am willing to hope) a continuance of the life of our beloved sovereign to the extent of that of Edward III. We should hope, on this account, that every thing in the above description is really what it appears to be, a prophetic view of the present gene-

ration; which opinion may be entertained without impiety. The allusion I take to be to the famous *jubilee* proclaimed by Edward III. in the 50th year of his reign, when that great king, full of years and honour, was preparing to take leave of the world.

*Time's new year's sand nine turns shall see*—The above verses, in my explanation, describe the opening of the present century, nine years turns from which brings us to 1809. In that year, his majesty, if he live to the wishes of his subjects, will accomplish the *fiftieth year* of his reign, and may have a *second scepter'd jubilee*. What follows, when *grey* (or age) is to be succeeded by *green* (or youth) I will not pursue; having arrived at the point I most earnestly wish for, and with which I shall be content. Some of your readers may perhaps remark, that the year alluded to is just one century beyond that of Swift's explanation of another prophecy of Merlin's; but with that I have nothing to do, further than to observe, that Dr. Johnson, in writing of it, says, that it cannot be read without amazement.

I am, sir, your constant reader,

OSIRIS.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWN OF BALLYMENA.

SIR,

A RESIDENCE of eight days, in the town of Ballymena, enabled me to write the following account of it, which I now send you for insertion in your Miscellany, if you think it worthy of a place.

Ballymena is situated on a rising ground, about 21 miles N.W. of Belfast, it consists of four principal, and several smaller streets, and contains about 2500 inhabitants, the houses are built of stone, and have been lately very much improved.—It was formerly called *Kiln-hill-town*, and consisted originally of a few cabins and a kiln for drying corn; I observed two houses which are said to be very old, and are of very curious construction, one end of the front being built in the form of the gable end of a common house and

containing a very old fashioned window. A market-house, was first built here in 1680; the present one, with a steeple of about 60 feet high, stands in the centre of the town, upon the site of the old one: here are three houses of worship, viz. a church, a presbyterian meeting-house, and a methodist house; the river Braid which rises in the Claggan mountains, about seven miles from the town, flows through it and joins the *Main* near Gracehill, it is well stocked with trout, *dolochan*, &c. near this is a Danish rath, now called the moat, from which is an excellent view of Mr. Adair's (the proprietor of the estate) house and demesne; the house is very poor, but in a good situation. I was told that a better one which stood here, was some years ago destroyed by fire. Here is an excellent weekly market for  $\frac{1}{2}$  wide linens, cows, horses, &c. I have great pleasure in mentioning that it is in contemplation to have lamps erected in the different streets, and it is highly creditable to the inhabitants that they seem unanimous in their wishes for its accomplishment. R.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine

SIR,  
WHEN an author comes forward to communicate to the public, what he calls discoveries or inventions; he is supposed to have taken his ground deliberately, and to have previously made himself acquainted with those inventions, that preceded his own in the same line: the less apology will therefore be due, for the following observations on a paper signed "*Job Rider*," which appeared in your Magazine for June last.

The hydrometer has hitherto been confined to one use, but this author has enumerated no less than four uses to which it is applicable, viz. "its accuracy in showing the specific gravity of fluids," second, "its use in showing the temperature, in the same manner as the thermometer," third, "how it may be made to act as a baroscope;" and fourth, "how it is convertible into a barometer." "In the course of business I made an hydrometer, of which the ball